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PASTOR JOSEPH AND HIS FRIENDS TAKING LEAVE OF THE WEDDING PARTY.

THE REFUGEES OF THE BLACK FOREST.

CHAPTER SECOND.

DELICATE, simple in her tastes, and scarce eighteen, Egantine Rosa seemed a strange bride for the
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Castellan, as she stood by his side in attire little above that of the mountain peasants who now filled the great chamber of the tower. It was strewn with fresh grass, and the faded tapestry, which had hung there since the tower was new and the family

richer, was ornamented with great bouquets of wild flowers gathered from cliff and forest. Most of the company thought that a day of exaltation for the Rosas; and there might have been some among them who envied Eglantine the great match. Her dead father had arranged it long ago, after a custom too common in his day. Her mother considered it a handsome provision for the girl, and Eglantine accepted without doubt or question what she had been taught to regard as her natural destiny.

"He that turned the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, bless you, neighbours, and bring you from all errors of faith and practice to the grace of his gospel, and the glory of his kingdom," said pastor Joseph, as, after some simple words of well wishing to the bride and her family, he and his people went on their way.

Gueslin thought the Dominican had looked like one surprised at the sight of the missionary, and seemed willing to attract little observation while he remained; but scarce had the Vaudois departed when his look grew dark as a wintry nightfall, and he demanded in a tone of stern rebuke—"What people are these with whom ye seem so friendly? and why do they not stay to witness this holy sacrament?"

"Reverend father," said Gueslin, in haste to set the prior right, "they are our neighbours, and belong to the religion of the valleys."

"You associate with heretics, then!" said father Bernardo, casting on the young man, and still more particularly on his mother, a look of extreme horror. The widow started, and so did half the company, for heretic was a word of fearful meaning in those times. To the catholic peasantry it brought a vague idea of dark and unimaginable guilt, and was associated with ideas of torch and fagot, or imprisonment and military rapine. Gueslin had felt personally wounded by the prior's remark.

"Indeed, reverend father," he exclaimed, "we are not accustomed to call our neighbours by such uncharitable names, and these mountains have heard enough on the matter of heresy."

"Bring out my mule!" said the Dominican, assuming a martyr air. "Noble Castellan, will you permit two of your retainers to help an old man through the rough mountain ways? for I cannot remain where the church has been insulted. It grieves me to think how sad my report will make the heart of that pious Chatelaine, your grandmother."

The last hint had its expected effect. Aware of the confessor's power, Robert Bazzana, who would not have given precedence to the proudest noble in Savoy, commenced coaxing the old Dominican (who by the way was the reputed son of a swineherd) to stay and celebrate his marriage. The widow joined in his entreaties, and Gueslin, fearing the consequences to his family, made an humble apology for his hasty words, which so far mollified father Bernardo that he consented to proceed with the wedding rites and remain till the feast should be partially discussed; stipulating, however, by way of general penance, that the Castellan and his bride should set out with him on their homeward way two hours after noon.

"Prepare no viands for me," said the prior, when the brief ceremony was finished, and the feast appeared. "I will retire behind the tower, where

all the devout may join me in prayer and fasting for the conversion of those darkened Vaudois."

Besides being keeper of the dowager marchioness of Susa's conscience, father Bernardo was titular superior of the convent of "the holy manger," yet the only person who availed herself of this privilege was old Marietta, the Rosas' only servant. Father Bernardo's eye had been upon her while he spoke, and whatever prayers might have been repeated, the simple Marietta afterwards remarked that he took time to make most minute inquiries concerning the bride, her family, and every individual in the valley. The innocent mirth of the wedding company had been broken, and could not be repaired. The Castellan was absent and gloomy, Madame Rosa looked troubled, Gueslin tried in vain to cheer up matters, and all scattered away sad and dissatisfied, when the young bride kissed her mother and departed, as they considered in great pomp, on the scarlet covered mule.

While things thus progressed with the wedding party, pastor Joseph and his company had wound through moorland, heath, and forest, by short paths known to the mountaineers, to their parting spot, where the girdle of steep rocks, inclosing at the feet of almost meeting Alps the famous valley known as the Pra del Torre, is broken by a narrow gorge, the only outlet from that isolated region. They had parted there for many a year as sure as the spring came round. The pastor was still zealous and his people faithful, but never had they felt so unwilling to say farewell. Many affections had found room in the small group that stood around the missionary and his companion Claude, now going forth for the first time on a perilous service, for their way was to Calabria, where continual persecution had sorely diminished the ancient Vaudois churches. The youth had no fears, and though devoted to missionary labours and losses, his human hope was in some distant and promised time to find himself a home in the Shepherd's-rest with Claire Constant. There was a faithful attachment between his brother Humbert and Claire's elder sister, but when the old shepherd asked her to become his daughter, Renee said, "I cannot leave my brother alone with the care of our young sisters—wait till Louisin is older."

Pastor Joseph knew almost the very thoughts of his flock. He had been their confidant and counsellor ever since Jacob Constant was taken from among them. In his absence a species of patriarchal authority devolved by common consent on old Gaston, and so they lived from year to year in social labour, love, and peace; their quiet lives varied only by the comings and goings of their pastor. Once more he knelt with them on the mossy rock, and prayed for all and every one of the company, that they might be kept from the evil that was in the world, and if it were not his lot to meet them again in the Shepherd's-rest, that he might find them safe in that of heaven. Then the old advices were repeated that they would keep peace and purity among them, cultivate charity, go to church when they could, and read the great bible, his only property, which he left in sacred trust with the Constants. To them he had spoken still more earnestly at home, for the solitary man looked on them as his children. They had never grieved so much in parting with him before, but

old Gaston and his family bade Claude farewell so bravely, that all, even to young Louisin, dashed away their tears and watched the pair striding through the mountain pass till the jutting crags concealed them from their view.

Their return was sad and slow, and for some time their cottage seemed solitary without the pastor. They missed his helpful presence in their rustic toils, his prayers at night and morning, and his pleasant converse when the hearth was lighted and the day's work done. The hunters and the shepherd's family missed him too, and caught themselves asking where young Claude could be, when they met together. The valley's people were so few that two out of their number left a great chasm in the circle. But in the discharge of their humble duties among fields, and flocks, and vineyards; in their evening gatherings to read that treasured bible, for they had but one, and a rare and precious possession it was in those times; and in their Sabbath goings to church, which was to them a day's journey, the time stole away, and spring deepened into summer. A goatherd brought the Constants word that pastor Joseph had been heard of on the Italian frontier—that he and Claude were well; and one mountaineer had passed the tidings to another till they reached him. That news rejoiced their hearts, but the simple, pious family had another cause of joy. Their neighbour's son Gueslin Rosa, who had saved their young sister's life, began to seek their society more than ever, and talk freely with them on matters of faith.

The Vaudois, we may take the opportunity of remarking, were proverbially a modest and pacific people; but living amidst enemies, and knowing not when their faith might be called in question, the humblest were taught to give a reason for the hope that was in them. Their schools were few and far apart. Their libraries consisted of some volumes belonging to the pastors, and lent from one to another; yet even in the remoteness and solitude of the Shepherd's-rest few among the noble and wealthy of their times were better instructed than the Constants. They could all write and read, understood the doctrines and history of their own church, with its noble army of martyrs, and above all were thoroughly acquainted with the bible. Gueslin had learned something of it long ago at the school of pastor Joseph, who never lost an opportunity of communicating eternal truth to those who came only for worldly teaching. Hitherto it seemed to have made little impression, but the Constants remembered how they had heard their uncle say of him, that, like the young man in the gospel, he was not far from the kingdom of heaven. If the widow's son were not as earnest as his serious single-hearted neighbours could have wished, he was at least willing to discuss and inquire, and many an hour of rustic but most friendly controversy was spent in their cottage porch, under its wreathing vines, or at the house of old Gaston, where the mountain friends met to read the pastor's bible. By and by Madame Rosa began to come with her son. She was lonely now in the old tower. Some minds are moved to inquire after whatever they hear most spoken against, and since the prior denounced as heretics the neighbours who had been so kind, and led such honest lives, the simple widow whom father Am-

brose left so much to herself in that distant corner, was naturally curious to hear something of their creed. Thus all things seemed working together for good, and the Constants were glad at heart with the hope that this worthy family, to whom they owed so much gratitude, might be enlightened through their instrumentality and brought into the same fold. How the missionary would rejoice over them at his return! What concord and unity there would be in the Shepherd's-rest! So they thought, and strove, and prayed together, for young as they were the pastor's household knew the value of gospel truth; but a dark though temporary disappointment was before them.

One summer morning they were astonished to see a poor stranger at work on a wild heathy slope visible to the whole valley, and not far from the tower. His head and feet were bare. He wore a coarse, scanty robe, with a rude cord round his waist, from which a leathern purse depended, and was employed in constructing a hut of boughs which he had brought from the forest, stuck in the ground, and interwoven with considerable ingenuity.

"I will go and assist him," said Victor Constant, as he and his sister Renee discovered what the stranger had in hand from the top of their own vineyard; and no sooner said than done: the active youth was at his side in a few minutes.

"Good father," said Victor, employing the primitive address of the Vaudois to all elderly people, "will you let me help you? I can weave osiers well, or if you like I will make ready mortar for the walls, while you come down to our cottage yonder, and my sisters will make you a breakfast."

"Call me not good father," replied the stranger, "such titles are above the desert of a frail and sinful man. My name is Brother Pietro, and I am a friar of the order of St. Lazarus the mendicant. I have journeyed through all the towns and villages of Piedmont and Savoy, after the manner of my order, giving spiritual instruction and aid to all needy souls, without distinction or reward; and now, in fulfilment of a solemn vow, I have climbed to build me a hut in this lonely valley, and live a hermit for three years. My meals consist of a crust of bread and a cup of water, which I have at hand," and the friar pointed to the pouch at his side, and a stream hard by. "Your help I cannot accept, having vowed to build this hut with my own hands; but for the offer I will remember you in my prayers, that it may be reckoned to you for a good work at the day of account."

Neither the affected humility of this response, nor the austereities it set forth, could impose on the pastor's nephew. Victor knew what the whole valley had shortly to learn by experience, that deceit, uncharitableness, and spiritual pride too often find shelter in the so-called penitential garb and cell, and he mildly answered:—

"To be remembered in the prayers of the righteous is doubtless a great privilege, but as to relying on such works for salvation, stranger, I trust in him who said, 'Look unto me and be ye saved,' and not to anything that I can do or suffer."

"Yes, my son," said the friar, casting his eyes to the ground, "but holy mother church has in all ages admitted the efficacy of pious works."

"Stranger, I belong not to your church. My

religion is that of the valleys, of the first Christians, martyrs, and apostles: I am a Vaudois."

As Victor uttered these words, the friar turned his back upon him, ran off a few steps, and flinging himself on his knees, he drew out from his bosom a wooden rosary with a crucifix attached, and fell to his Latin prayers with amazing volatility, trembling all the while as if with unmeasured horror.

The honest sensible young man could scarcely forbear smiling at this procedure, but his Christian feelings were shocked at such a profanation of prayer, and he walked quietly away to explain matters to his sisters, who witnessed the scene from their place of work among the vines.

"Perhaps, brother, it is judging too hardly," said Renee; "it may be that his horror was sincere. I have heard that many priests are ignorant of our doctrines and call us infidels. If our uncle were here he would reason with him."

"No, sister; I fear it was a pretext," said Victor; "at least it did not look real."

"But he will be cold up there in the chill nights," said Louisin. "Shouldn't we send him one of our blankets? See! brother, brother, he is looking round."

Round brother Pietro did look, and seeing he had no audience, speedily rose up, laid aside his rosary, and recommenced work. Before noon the frail edifice was finished, plastered with clay, and thatched with heath. Close by, the friar erected a rustic altar of the mountain turf, produced from his leatheren pouch a wooden pix, patten, and chalice, and went round the whole valley with a small bell in his hand, loudly proclaiming that he was about to celebrate mass. It was grievous to the mountain friends to hear of such a celebration in their valley. Its rocks had never heard the chant of monks' Latin before; but most of all the Constants grieved to see not only Madame Rosa and her servant, but even Gueslin, what brother Pietro called "assisting at mass," though these comprehended his entire audience. Readers, the prejudices of early education are strong, and the world's experience has proved that there are few that hold so firm as those of popery. It was but the previous evening that they had talked with Gueslin of the one sacrifice by which redemption was perfected for ever; but the request of his mother, the apparent sanctity of brother Pietro, and his own lukewarmness, prevailed over half conviction.

The three Vaudois families gathered in the house of old Gaston that evening, as they were wont on all extraordinary occasions. The shepherd told them tales of the great wars and persecutions he remembered; how the peasantry said that always before they began, monks and friars were seen about the valleys; and all joined fervently in the simple prayer that pastor Joseph might be soon and safely restored to them.

From the day of brother Pietro's arrival the quiet of the Shepherd's-rest was gone. The friar would not accept the blanket which poor Louisin insisted on presenting to him against the chill nights; but the pruners of the vines, the weeders of the corn, and the watchers of the peaceful sheep, were startled noon after noon by brother Pietro's bell and loud proclamation of mass. When that passed unheeded, he announced a series of

sermons, and preached on the heath to the few Romanists he could lure so far, with most violent gesticulations and abundance of Latin. Most of his sermons were against the Vaudois in general, and the Constants in particular, whose cottage he declared to be "the hold of Satan, where in not only ignorant men, but even women, dared to read that dangerous book the bible, contrary to the commands of popes and the decrees of councils." They soon began to perceive a sad change in their neighbours at the tower. Old Marietta fled when one of them approached, as if from a pestilence. Madame Rosa never ventured to their cottage, and though Gueslin was still friendly they saw him seldom.

Some days after the friar's last sermon, Victor and Renee, assisted by old Gaston and his son Humbert, were propping up some of their vines which had fallen—for their load was heavy that year—when Gueslin came hastily, and bid them good morrow.

"Are your people all well?" he inquired, as they answered his salutation.

"All," said the shepherd.

"Why is it that you never come to talk or read with us now?" said Victor.

"Oh neighbours, things are going ill with us at home. My mother practises austerities which are I fear too much for her poor broken health. Some grief too is wearing her heart away, and I know it is because the friar tells her that you are heretics, and it is a sin for me to keep your company or read the bible. Now, neighbours, as I am an honest man, I don't believe it is a sin; and yet I know not what to believe," said the perplexed young man. "But I can't vex my mother; so farewell, good neighbours, I won't come again; and you, Renee, will tell this to Claire and to Louisin." As Gueslin uttered the last word he rushed away like one afraid of an answer.

The whole valley loved him well. It was sad to think that so brave and kindly a nature should be thus hindered in the upward progress of the best and purest of human affections, by the superstition of a begging friar.

"We all deserve this!" cried Humbert, his fiery temper breaking bounds, "for suffering a friar to settle in our valley. He will bring a swarm of his kind upon us. Father, shall I take my club and chase him down the mountain?"

"No, Humbert," said the old shepherd; "thou art a brave boy, but this fierce humour of thine becomes not a Christian."

Renee's look said—"Would you be a persecutor?" and half ashamed, half mollified, Humbert fell to work again; but the friends knew not that under a special Providence brother Pietro was even then working out his own expulsion.

FOLLOWING A SPEAKER.

EDWARD CAVE, a Rugby schoolboy, was apprenticed to a printer, and when out of his time, worked as a journeyman typographer, until he obtained a situation in the post-office. While holding it, he employed his leisure in correcting the "Gradus ad Parnassum," for which he was liberally rewarded by the Company of Stationers; and he also wrote

an "Account of Criminals." In other ways he at the same time employed his ingenuity; for, by a correspondence which his place in the post-office facilitated, he procured country newspapers, and sold their intelligence to a journalist in London, from whom he received a guinea a week. He was afterwards made clerk of the franks, and gained the credit of much intelligence and zeal in this department of the public service.

Having acquired the means of embarking in business on his own account, he entered on it at St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell, then one of the best known places in the metropolis, establishing himself as a printer. With a literary turn, and a keen eye to profit, he formed the design of establishing a miscellany, to contain the most valuable of the fugitive pieces from the newspapers, and other sheets and half sheets that had appeared during the month. He offered a share of it to half the booksellers in London, who declined it under the idea that the project was absurd, or injurious to their interests; and in 1731, he produced, at his own risk, the "Gentleman's Magazine," the first ever printed in England. For many years it kept Cave in affluence, though one rival after another appeared to share or destroy its success.

Till about four years after this periodical was started, the current proceedings of the House of Commons were no more known to the public than those of the cabinet council. Accounts of single speeches, and even of entire debates, had indeed been occasionally printed from a much earlier period; but the only record of parliamentary proceedings generally accessible were in two annual publications, "The Historical Register" and "The Political State of Europe." Parliament sternly maintained its right to prohibit all publication of its doings, at least during the session; and many persons maintained that it had a great power during the recess.

Cave determined, however, that something more should be accomplished; and in an extraordinary number of the "Gentleman's Magazine," for August, 1735, there was a report of a debate in the House of Lords, on the 23rd of the preceding January. He continued the practice in succeeding monthly numbers. But its range was exceedingly limited. It was not till the session had terminated that any of its occurrences were given; even then, there were only printed the first and last letters of the speaker's name; and often these were omitted, all that appears being a summary of the discussion.

Gradually Cave became bolder, and at length printed the speakers' names in full. This audacity, combined with the idea of some members that they were not fairly reported, led to an animated discussion in parliament. Sir Thomas Winnington, after alluding to the conduct of the Lords in punishing some printers for publishing their protests, asked if they were to be less jealous of their privileges than the other house? "What," said he, "will be the consequence, if you allow these reports to go on unchecked? Why, sir, you will have every word that is spoken here by gentlemen, misrepresented by fellows who thrust themselves into our gallery. You will have the speeches of this house every day printed, even during your session; and we shall be looked upon as the most contemptible assembly on the face of the earth."

Others followed in the same strain, and among them Sir Robert Walpole. He said: "You have with great justice punished some persons for forging the names of gentlemen on the backs of letters; but the abuse now complained of is, I conceive, a forgery of a worse kind; for it tends to misrepresent the sense of parliament, and impose on the understanding of the whole nation. It is but a petty damage that can arise from a forged frank, when compared to the infinite mischiefs that may come from this practice. I have read some debates of this house, sir, in which I have been made to speak the very reverse of what I meant. I have read others of them where all the wit, the learning, and the argument has been thrown into one side, and on the other nothing but what was low, mean, and ridiculous; and yet when it comes to the question, the division has gone against the side which, upon the face of the debate, had reason and justice to support it." The result of this debate was, that a resolution was unanimously agreed to, declaring it "a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of, the privileges of the house to publish the debates, either while parliament is sitting, or during the recess," and threatening to proceed against offenders with "the utmost severity."

The person now engaged by Cave for obtaining, at greater risk, the parliamentary debates, was Mr. William Guthrie, who was descended from an ancient family in Scotland, but having only a small patrimony, and being an adherent of the House of Stuart, could not accept of any office in the state, and became, in consequence, an author by profession. His writings in history, politics, and criticism, are said to have had considerable merit. Endowed with a quick and tenacious memory, Guthrie brought home and digested the debates, which were published in the "Gentleman's Magazine," as those in the "Senate of Lilliput;" while the "London Magazine" issued them under the title of a "Journal of the Proceedings and Debates in the Political Club," giving Roman names to the speakers; each publication supplying, at the end of the year, an explanatory key to the whole. In the service of the latter periodical, Mr. Thomas Gordon, also a native of Scotland, and a translator of Tacitus, appears to have been employed.

About this time Samuel Johnson, who had for some years furnished essays and biographies to the "Gentleman's Magazine," arrived in London, poverty-stricken and in search of employment, and Cave committed to him the revision of Guthrie's reports. These were subsequently more and more enriched by Johnson's genius, until Cave resolved that he should undertake the whole, from the scanty notes of persons employed to attend the two houses, often containing only the names of the several speakers, and the part they took in the debate. The reports from November 19th, 1740, to February 23rd, 1743, were entirely Johnson's.

A well known anecdote casts no little light on the course he pursued in this engagement. After dinner, in a party of some distinguished persons, Dr. Francis, the translator of Horace, remarked that he had been employed during several years in the study of Demosthenes, and that he had completed a translation of the Greek orator, with the greatest attention, but that a recent speech of Mr. Pitt was the best he had ever read. Many of the

company remembered the debate, and were lavish in their praise of many passages in the speech; but Johnson remained silent. On the applause subsiding, Johnson declared that he had written the speech; the company were struck with astonishment, and after some minutes of mute amazement, as they stared at one another, Francis asked how this could be? "Sir," said Johnson, "I wrote that speech in a garret in Exeter-street. I never was in the gallery of the House of Commons but once. Cave had interest with the door-keepers. He, and the persons under him, got admittance. They brought away the subject of discussion, the names of the speakers, the side they took, and the order in which they rose, together with notes of the various arguments adduced in the course of the debate. The whole was afterwards communicated to me, and I composed the speeches in the form they now bear in parliamentary debates; for the speeches of that period are all reprinted from Cave's Magazine." Francis replied: "Then, sir, you have exceeded Demosthenes himself; for to say you have exceeded Francis's Demosthenes would be nothing." The compliments of the party were still more abundant; and one in particular lauded Johnson's impartiality, observing that he had "dealt out reason and eloquence with an equal hand to both parties." "That is not quite true, sir," said Johnson; "I saved appearances well enough; but I took care that the whig dogs should not have the best of it."

The reports increased immensely the sale of the "Gentleman's Magazine," which now enabled Cave to set up an equipage. When a tailor asked Garrick for a motto for his carriage, he replied, "I will give you one from Shakespeare, 'List, list! O list!'" A late eminent barrister found one appropriate enough for himself, "Causes produce effects." And Cave, instead of going to the Herald's College, placed on the door-panel of his coach a representation of his office at St. John's-gate, Clerkenwell; an object which has become familiar to successive generations of readers who have made themselves acquainted with the lucubrations of the celebrated "Sylvanus Urban." In that office Johnson sometimes ate his dinner, concealed behind a screen, because his clothes were not sufficiently modish for the fashionable visitors of his employer; among whom, perhaps, were some young M. P.'s, who just dropped in to see or correct the proofs of their Ciceronian eloquence.

Mr. John Nichols, who had an interview with Johnson a few days before his death, supplies the following fact:—"He said to me that the parliamentary debates were the only part of his writings that then gave him any compunction; but at the time he wrote them he had no conception he was imposing on the world, though they were frequently written from very slender materials, frequently from none at all, and were, therefore, the mere coinage of his own imagination. He never wrote any part of his works with equal velocity. Three columns of the Magazine in an hour was no uncommon effort, which was faster than most persons could have transcribed the quantity."

Cave and another were committed, in April, 1747, to the custody of the usher of the black rod, for a breach of privilege, in printing a report of the trial of Lord Lovatt. Cave admitted, on

his examination, that he had taken notes, and that speeches were sent to him by very eminent persons, but denied his employing persons to make speeches for him. Further measures were not resorted to; he expressed contrition, and was discharged on paying his fees. His regret, it may be supposed, was rather attributable to the inconveniences he suffered, than to the cause that enfealed them. Johnson said emphatically, "Cave never looked out of window but with a view to the 'Gentleman's Magazine.'

A new power for reporting was wielded when the art of stenography began to be practically applied. Thus, we find the publication from the shorthand notes of Sir Henry Cavendish, a member of the unreported parliament, as it is termed, which sat from 1768 to 1774, and from which strangers were excluded, a valuable addition to the political history of this country, and for it we are indebted entirely to this art. The shorthand notes, written according to Gurney's system, were found among the Egerton manuscripts.

The most distinguished of the next race of reporters was William Woodfall, who was placed in the printing-office of Mr. Baldwin, and afterwards assisted his father in the same business. He was accustomed to make, now and then, a secret note, and, when the house was up, he wrote a report from his brief memoranda, which sometimes occupied him till noon the next day, the paper, the "Public Advertiser," being published in the evening. Here we observe the use of the newspaper as the medium of the report, so long restricted to the magazine. So extensive did this reporter's reputation become, that it is stated, when strangers visited the gallery of the House of Commons, the first question was, "Which is the Speaker?" and the second, "Which is Mr. Woodfall?"

The public are indebted to the late Mr. Perry for the first suggestion and introduction of the practice that has since prevailed. It was about the year 1783 that, on becoming the editor of "The Gazetteer," he proposed the establishment of a body of reporters, to attend every night in succession at both houses. He saw clearly that, by this division of labour, he should be able to issue more ample and correct reports, and at a much earlier hour. Still, reporters were exposed to many and great inconveniences. Their only entrance to the gallery of the Commons was that of the public generally; and on days when special interest was excited—and these were many—they had to take their places on the stairs early in the forenoon, and to battle their way with the crowd when the door was opened.

But a memorable night arrived; the premier, Mr. Pitt, was to make "a great speech," and so thronged was the gallery that, neither by force nor entreaty, could the reporters obtain any tolerable accommodation. They agreed forthwith to leave the house; and on the following morning, instead of the rounded and eloquent periods of the minister, the newspapers presented only a blank, accompanied by a strong comment on the grievance in which it originated. It was now speedily redressed, under the direction of the Speaker, who appropriated the uppermost bench of the gallery to the reporters, as preserving them most com-

pletely from interruption, and gave them a door for their exclusive use. A small apartment shortly afterwards bore on its glass panels the words "Reporters' Room," where they might wait when they were too early for their "turn," and also during the divisions of the house.

In reference to these, a singular fact may be mentioned. On a division of the house taking place, all strangers were required to withdraw; and as they went out at such times, and returned by the same door, there was a difficulty in clearing the gallery, as every one was disposed to linger, that he might be as near as possible to the door when it was re-opened. At length, some one very cleverly suggested that strangers should withdraw by the usual door, but that they should re-enter by another, placed at the opposite end of the gallery. The plan was at once adopted, and answered admirably; the gallery was cleared with extraordinary despatch, for those who were now the first to leave stood the best chance of being the first re-admitted.

The House of Lords followed the example of the Commons in some attention to the reporters, at whose practice, notwithstanding their rules, they alike connived. There was a time—and one not even now very remote—when a note-book obtruding itself at the bar of the upper house would be struck from the hand of its holder by one of the messengers. Mr. Windyer, a reporter, afterwards a justice of the peace at Sydney, is said to have been the first person who ventured to rest his book on their lordships' bar—an example speedily followed by others. Only two sessions after, on Lord Eldon proceeding to the bar to receive a deputation from the lower house, his robe caused Mr. Windyer to drop his book within the bar, when the noble earl checked his onward step, picked up the fragments of the passing debate, and presented them to Mr. Windyer with a smile.

Mr. Gillman describes his friend Coleridge as engaged to report a speech of Pitt's, starting by seven in the morning, but becoming exhausted long before night. "Mr. Pitt," he says, "for the first quarter of an hour, spoke fluently, and in his usual manner, and sufficiently to give a notion of his best style; this was followed by a repetition of words, and words only; he appeared to 'talk against time,' as the phrase is. Coleridge fell asleep, and listened occasionally only to the speeches that followed. On his return, the proprietor of the paper being anxious for the report, Coleridge informed him of the result, and, finding his anxiety great, immediately *volunteered* a speech for Mr. Pitt, which he wrote off-hand, and which answered the purpose exceedingly well. The following day, and for days after publication, the proprietor received complimentary letters announcing the pleasure received at the report, and wishing to know who was the reporter. The secret was however, kept, and the real author of the speech concealed; but one day Mr. Canning, calling on business, made similar inquiries, and received the same answer. Canning replied, 'It does more credit to the author's head than to his memory.'"

When the benchers of Lincoln's Inn determined to exclude from their society any who ventured to write for the newspapers, and a petition was presented to the House of Commons against their

bye-law, Sheridan defended the reporters, and said that "there were amongst them no less than twenty-three graduates of the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, and Edinburgh; these gentlemen were all in their progress to honourable professions; and there was no possible course better than that they had adopted for the improvement of their minds, and the acquisition of political experience. They had adopted this course from an honest and honourable impulse, and had to boast the association of many great names, who had risen from poverty to reputation. This had been long the employment, and, indeed, chief means of subsistence, of Dr. Johnson and Mr. Burke. Such were the men at whose depression this legal bye-law aimed."

Mr. Stephen, the father of the present Right Honourable Sir James Stephen, followed, and declared that he had been for thirty-five years a member of Lincoln's Inn, but had nothing to do with this bye-law, and thought it a most illiberal and unjust proscription; a scandal rather to its authors than to its objects. "I will put a case," Mr. Stephen continued; "I will suppose a young man of education and talent contending with pecuniary difficulties—difficulties not proceeding from vice, but from family misfortunes. I will suppose him honestly meeting his obstructions with honourable industry, and exercising his talents by reporting the debates in this house, in order to obtain a profession. Where, I ask, is the degradation of such an employment? Who could be so meanly cruel as to deprive him of it? The case, sir, which I have now supposed, was thirty years ago—*my own!*"

Similar declarations might be made by distinguished men who are still living; and there are interesting reminiscences of many of the departed. Of one, named Proby, Jordain says:—"He usually reported the whole debates in the peers from memory, without a note, for the 'Morning Chronicle.'" He adds some curious particulars of this very eccentric person. "Proby had never been out of London, never in a boat, never on the back of a horse. To the end of bag-wigs he wore a bag; he was the last man that walked with a cane as long as himself, ultimately exchanged for an umbrella, which he was never seen without, in wet weather or dry. He was always so punctual to a minute, that when he arrived in sight of the office window, the remark used to be, 'There's Proby—it is half-past two;' and yet he never set his watch. If ever it came to right time I cannot tell; but if you asked him what o'clock it was, he would look at it, and calculate something in this sort:—'I am twenty-six minutes past seven-four, twenty-one from twelve, forty—it is just three minutes past three!'"

It has been shrewdly suspected that reporters have sometimes indulged a sly humour, as when Mr. Wilberforce stated to the house that he had been described as recommending the cultivation of the potato in the following terms: "Potatoes make men healthy, vigorous, and active; but what is still more in their favour, they make men *tall*; more especially was he led to say so, as being rather under the common size, and he must lament that his guardians had not fostered him under that genial vegetable!"

Not many years ago, when restrictions on the

reporters were topics of conversation in the House of Commons, one member is said to have thus proceeded, with many of those hesitations and stumblings with which all around are perfectly familiar: " You know, sir, how I address you and this honourable house; and yet I never read the reports of my speeches without finding them all I could desire. I am sure I should be extremely ungrateful if I threw any obstacle in the way of gentlemen to whom I am indebted for all my fame!" There can be no doubt that a large number of our representatives have incurred similar obligations, though they have not been often so candidly acknowledged. The writer well remembers a new member delivering what is called " a crack speech," and his charging "The Times" with an incorrect and garbled report, which he proposed to substantiate by a comparison of it with those contained in certain other papers. The reply of the reporter of "The Times" was to the following effect: " The difference alleged is easily explained: Mr. — sent copies of his *intended* speech to the papers he mentions; we reported it as it was actually delivered!" Indeed, at one period an effort was made by a daily paper to give verbatim reports, but actions were threatened for gross misrepresentation; and when some members actually engaged reporters for their own speeches, the result speedily led them to relinquish the plan. It would doubtless have been otherwise, had the course marked out by one member not long since, in his *maiden* speech, been strictly adhered to: " Sir, in concluding my first address, I beg to observe, that I shall sometimes offer my opinions to you and this house, but I will give you two promises: I will not rise to speak unless I have something to say, and I will always leave off when I have done."

In 1833, Mr. O'Connell gave some offence to the reporters, and they resolved on the suppression of his speeches. As soon as this was discovered, Mr. O'Connell, rising in his place, said, " Sir, I see strangers!" " Strangers, withdraw!" was the immediate charge of the Speaker; and the deliberation of the house was continued with closed doors. But there was no animation in the discussion of that evening—no rhetorical declamation, no eloquently enforced argument—no scintillation of wit; and members who would "only trespass for a few minutes on the attention of the house," faithfully adhered to their word! Thin indeed was the house itself; the lobby was almost as empty as the gallery; and glad enough were those who were compelled to stay for a time, to flee from its precincts. Mr. O'Connell, however, had taken his revenge; and the reporters, fearing a return of his retaliation, rescinded their resolution, and gave his speeches to the world.

Mr. Horace Twiss, who had sat in parliament and been a member of Mr. Canning's administration, and who has since been known as the biographer of Lord Eldon, furnished, during many of the latter years of his life, the summary of the debate in the House of Commons, as it daily appeared during the session, in "The Times." With great skill he condensed the speeches as they were delivered; and might be observed by the visitors of the gallery, writing the pith of them, with a black-lead pencil in full, and occasionally making an erasure with a small piece of india-rubber, tied to one of his button-

holes. It was the pencil reports thus prepared that he despatched to the office, and those who wanted only the cream of the debate, found it provided for them in a certain part of the paper, with singular ability.

The parliamentary reporters of the present day amount to seventy or eighty in number. We will enter the gallery, and take a glance around. There, you see just below the gothic chair of the Speaker; before him the clerks at the table, on which the mace glitters, the symbol of authority, originally a club or instrument of war, made of iron and much used by cavalry, but in this instance gaily gilded, and adorned with a crown, a globe, and a cross; and the members, with their hats on, sitting or lounging on the benches, conversing about the bar, and leaving or entering the house; while here are the reporters in various attitudes. There is "The Times" looking at his finger nails, "The Chronicle" is taking a pinch of snuff, "The Herald" and the "Daily News" are laughing at some topic of mutual amusement, the reporters next to them yawn languidly, and not one of them is engaged in making a note, and why? It is quite enough that they have jotted down the name of the Hon. Member who is now "on his legs," though perhaps they may give him a few words in to-morrow's paper. Another and another rises, only to have, however, the same degree of attention; then comes one for whose "points" they wait; but now there is a man of mark; see how quickly their heads are inclined, with what railway speed their fingers move; you will have to-morrow, with wonderful accuracy, even at an early hour, when the paper is placed on your breakfast-table, with your coffee, toast, and eggs, not merely the speaker's thoughts, but *ipsissima verba*, his very words themselves.

Each reporter writes, or rather remains in the house, for about three-quarters of an hour; at the end of that time his place is taken by another, to resume the debate where he left off; while away a cab wheels him to the room in the newspaper office, where he writes out his notes on successive slips of paper, a boy standing ready to convey them to the compositor; and thus it is no unusual thing for the first part of a speech to be in type in the Strand, and in Printing-house Square, while the senator is actually delivering the remainder. More than this, the first part of a debate of special interest may be *read* in the evening in some of our metropolitan institutions, while the remainder is going on vigorously within the chamber of the palace at Westminster!

But we must pause: our present illustrations must suffice, of

" FOLLOWING A SPEAKER."

BIRMINGHAM AND HER MANUFACTURES.

2.—THE IRON COUNTRY.—NAILORS.—SMEILING.—PUDDLING.—ROLLING.

BEFORE we knock at the door of the Birmingham manufacturer, and demand admission to his workshops, it is necessary, for reasons which the reader will not be long in discovering, that we should take a preliminary ramble through some portion at

least of the outlying district of South Staffordshire. Iron is not made in Birmingham, though there ten thousand different things are made of it. It comes into Birmingham, for the most part, as do most other metals, in a hundred different shapes, prepared for the convenience of the workman, from the shapeless ore of the mine. To begin our survey at the beginning, we must transport ourselves for a brief season to the iron district, and there take a hasty glance at what we shall find going on.

It is a damp, close, and cloudy, but rainless morning early in November. We have dropped from one of the stages on the Stour Valley Railway, into a new world, a world bristling with stunted towers capped with flame, and tall black chimneys vomiting forth clouds of blacker smoke, which covers the whole region with a dismal canopy. Far away to the north a faint breeze has lifted the sulphurous curtain, and a line of white light reveals the distant horizon; but that horizon, as far as the eye can penetrate, is striped with the perpendicular forms of innumerable chimneys, whose summits appear to support the sombre covering of dusky vapour that overshadows us, as the pillars of a temple support the roof. The soil beneath our feet is ink black; the air we breathe is hot and stifling, as though every inspiration we draw had first gone through the process of singeing for our particular benefit; our nostrils are assailed with the smell of vulcanized oxygen; and in our ears the incessant bang, and clang, and roar, and boom of ponderous hammers thunder without the pause of a single moment. We are in the Iron Country.

We walk on, and leaving the railway route in our rear, direct our steps towards a point in the distance where the chimneys appear clustered the closest, and the smoke to have gathered the densest. There is no road to walk on worthy of the name, but a wheel-track of deep ruts through a bed of mud. The whole surface of the land, to the last square inch of it, has been turned upside down. The deep channel of mire through which we flounder on, winds its serpentine way between huge mounds of grey, red, and black masses of vitrified scoria, the fieculs of unnumbered furnaces. The intervals between these artificial hillocks are mostly stagnant pools of dark brown water, mantled over with a green metallic scum, upon the edge of which, here and there, far down beneath the level of the roadway, wretched huts and tumble-down sheds, proclaim by a stream of smoke issuing from a chimney of loose bricks, that there human habitants are content to rot or to riot, as it may be, in damp and filthy discomfort. Now we are on the outskirts of what should be a village, but which is in reality little more than a monstrous mass of dislocated building materials. Here a red-bricked cottage has fallen bodily back upon the bank of cinders behind it, the window-frames of the upper story still sticking to the woodwork of the lower, which retains its perpendicular and its tenants to boot, for an old woman is on her knees scrubbing the floor, and we can see the pot boiling on the fire in preparation for dinner. A neighbouring cottage which has shown symptoms of epilepsy, is bound down to good behaviour by a strong chain cable, twisted three times round its waist, and fastened

to a heavy mass of "rag" stone, probably brought there for the purpose of such anchorage; while a small square patch of land in the rear, upon which the occupant of the cottage had made a desperate attempt at a cabbage-garden, has slipped down to a perpendicular position, and the blackened stumps of the forlorn cabbages stick out horizontally, like broken rows of buttons on the ragged coat of a way-side vagrant. We are in the Iron Country.

On we go through mud and mire, and black steaming pools of water, crossing sloughs neck-deep upon planks of sodden timber, and stumbling along extempore railroads laid upon loose logs imbedded in the swampy soil. Here and there among the mounds of cinder and scoria, a bank of scorched and soot-clad grass lifts its once green top above the reeking ruins, over which a solitary tree, shorn of half its branches, stretches its jagged arms imploringly, and flutters its last few November leaves in depreciation of its impending fate, which is to be sawn into sleepers for the rails of the jolting tramway, or hewn into a prop to support some falling cabin. A sharp turn round a corner brings us suddenly to the banks of a canal of dark brown water, upon which long black barges loaded with coal and coal dust, and drawn by ropes harnessed to asses, are passing and repassing, amid the exchange of savage compliments belched forth from swart unshaven throats. A bridge of rickety planks, supported upon a couple of buttresses of uncemented bricks, just high enough to allow of the passage of a barge beneath, spans the canal at the distance of a hundred yards from where we stand; but to reach it we have to surmount the piles of smoking rubbish which bar the way. We are on the point of making the attempt, but are deterred by the sudden ejaculation from a moving mass of indescribable bundling, crouched a few yards in our rear, of "Cant crass theer! ya'll burn yer fut! must go roun to bridge." Round we go accordingly, trebling the distance, and, crossing the bridge, wander on amid the roaring din of clanging hammers, accompanied by an incomprehensible and portentous sound, deep as the bass of an organ, which thrills through every nerve and sets one's very bones a vibrating, and never intermits for a moment. Our way now leads by various sinuous windings, through a series of black and dusty mounds, at the base of which groups of nondescript creatures are employed, digging, sitting in sieves, and wheeling in barrows, and gradually undermining the masses that overshadow them. It is difficult at the first view to guess their sex; they wear the wrecks of men's hats, and scare-crow coats that once were men's are fastened round their waists with leather belts, or remnants of old neck-ties; and they use coarse men's coarse language, and bandy rude jokes; but their nether limbs are swathed in womanly attire, coarse and wretched though it be, and alas! women they are, abandoned, as appears to a spectator at least, to a miserable and most unwomanly lot. We are in the Iron Country.

On again, skirting a monster factory whose iron pulses throb with never-tiring energy, whose tall chimney spreads a permanent pall of sable over the rugged earth, and whose pyramidal towers shoot forth tongues of flame. On, past numberless little brick erections, consisting of a square-columned

flue, a long boiler naked to the winds of heaven, and a little one-eyed brick cottage, from whose one eye a long iron arm keeps perpetually pawing up and down, over a collection of wheels of all diameters, continually revolving, and which assemblage of contrivances a traveller, whom we interrogate on the subject, informs us is denominated a "whinsey." On, past solid acres of refuse and scoria, more solid acres of coal-breeze and dusty fuel, and all piled remorselessly upon a soil undermined in every part, ploughed up in every part, scorched and fire-blasted in every part, laid waste and desolate in every part, where a dormouse or a beetle could scarcely find food, or a sparrow a nest, where the song of the lark is never heard, or the wing of the butterfly glimmers in the sunshine. On, through crowds of busy forms, clustering like bees around their fiery hives, feeding the hungry furnaces, and raking in their blazing throats, dragging dazzling masses of white-hot metal along the ground, whirling it aloft and brandishing it in the air, and disappearing in the gloomy recesses of their cyclopean caverns. On, through a lane of smoking kilns and rows of blacksmiths' forges, more mountains of coal-breeze and iron cinders, more stagnant ponds and tumble-down cabins, more tram-roads, submerged in mud, and more wildernesses of brick and stone; and out at last upon a little patch of unviolated earth, only a small angular patch of a few rods, and there stands a little chapel of dingy brick, bearing an inscription on its front, which assigns it to a very respectable body. The chapel is itself a monument and an exemplar of the lesson it was designed to teach, of the perishing nature of all earthly things. Small as it is—and it would barely accommodate a hundred people—the thin crust of earth upon which it was built was not strong enough to support the foundations; they have sunk below their original bed, and a ghastly rent in the main wall of the building gives a prophetic warning of what may be expected when the next disturbance takes place in the mine beneath. We are in the Iron Country.

On again, with unwearied foot: the natural clouds are passing away, and the artificial ones, the sable plumes that nod from the summits of the fiery columns, catch a lighter hue from the sun's rays. The hour of noon is drawing near as we approach a straggling hamlet, a nameless cluster of half-built half-dilapidated sheds and cottages, which form the homes of the toiling Vulcans of the district. Children with unwashed faces are dabbling in the mire, or seated brawling on the door-steps. A savoury odour issues forth from open doors and windows; and from lattice and casement, wives, mothers, and daughters project their yellow faces, and peer up and down the road, watching for the coming of fathers, husbands, and brothers to the midday repast. What mean these haggard aspects and woe-begone glances of the matron and the mother? What mean the sallow countenance and cavernous cheeks of the young girl in her teens? Why is the neck that should be white, and delicate, and fair, and fashioned in the mould of natural grace and loveliness, neither white nor fair, nor well-formed, but yellow, and jaundiced, and wrinkled, and disfigured by a huge unsightly wen in the throat, bigger than a pigeon's crop? Why are eyes that should be bright with the natural gaiety of

youth, dim and leaden? and limbs that should be rounded with the proportions of beauty, lean and lank? Why do the children scuttle away to the rear of the cottage? and why does the little lustre in the daughter's eye wax dimmer yet, as the father, slouching forward with heavy tread, swings his broad round shoulders into the open doorway? We know no answer to all these questions, save and except that—we are in the Iron Country.

We must on yet once more, through the straggling hamlet and its outlying wildernesses of rubbish—through desolate fields where grass refuses to grow, but merely lives a blighted life, and where if it would grow, the cattle would refuse to eat it—through narrow lanes and squashy footways, with here a shed, and there a kiln, and everywhere a "whinsey," pawing up and down in the air in token of the hard work it is accomplishing at a depth of sixty or seventy fathoms below the surface. We must go on even though we should be benighted in returning; for we mean to take a glance at the nail-makers, a small community of whom are located in this neighbourhood. So we put the "best foot foremost," by which means we soon leave the worst of the way behind us, and by dint of an hour's uphill walking, arrive at the village of —, whose population are mostly nailors.

Perhaps in this time of general commercial activity and industrial prosperity, the most melancholy spectacle which the Iron Country can afford is that of the poor nailor's home. At a time when machines are in constant operation making nails at the rate of hundreds, and of some sorts thousands a minute, the nailor pits himself against them, making nails singly, by hand. Let us enter the nailor's miserable cottage, and glance at his home, his profession, and his prospects. At the time of our arrival he is sitting at his forge fire, which fronts the lane, and he and his family of three girls and a boy are dining upon bread and a modicum of soap-like cheese. The repast is soon finished, and he and they betake themselves again to their occupation. One small forge, round which the girls sit, each in front of a little anvil, suffices for them all. They are supplied with bundles of small iron rods weighed out to them by their employers, and which they have to make into nails of certain patterns, returning the weight, deducting a certain allowance for loss in the manufacture. One is making "brads," another the long nails known as "tenpenny-nails," and a third is fashioning "clouts." The father, who can make "any nail that ever was made," takes all kinds of work, and is well off just now in having a commission for horse-shoe nails, the fabrication of which pays better than any other sort. He is a man of five-and-forty years of age, but he looks sixty: poverty, hunger, and the long sieges which he has endured in periods of strikes, have done the work of years upon his frame. Like the ancient mariner, he is "lean and leaden-eyed;" there appears to be hardly a pound of flesh on his bones; Shylock would have found it difficult to have enforced his penalty upon him. His sole recreation is, perhaps, the beer-shop, and his one standing enjoyment, the quid of tobacco that revolves under his tongue. His only son, who is not above eleven years of age, seems to have enough to do in attending upon his father and sisters, in blowing the patched and

asthmatic bellows, and keeping the thin rods of iron hot in the fire.

Now the four hammers are at work pattering incessantly, while the sparks of hot metal fly about in all directions. The rods, heated at one end to a white heat, are held in the left hand with a pair of pincers; a few strokes of a small but yet heavy hammer, and the point of the nail is forged—one smart blow upon the sharp edge of the anvil severs it from the rod; in an instant it is seized by the pincers, the sharp end dropped into a kind of vice or sheath prepared for the purpose, where a few taps, administered secundum artem, fashion the particular kind of head required, and the nail is complete—the rod of metal being replaced in the fire, and another instantly drawn forth to undergo the same operation. These several short processes appear to occupy about a minute, or something less, but the length of the operation of course varies very much with the article to be produced. The nailor made for our satisfaction specimens of the various kinds of nails most in use, and turned them all out of hand with astonishing dexterity. The horse-shoe nails are not forged in a straight form like the others, but bent in curves and wavy lines, for no other reason, so far as our informant was aware, than that the farriers like to straighten them themselves at the time of using.

Upon interrogating this poor fellow as to the profits and prospects of his trade, he commenced a long and lugubrious narrative of his past experience in his profession. The price of his peculiar labour had been going down lower and lower for the last twenty years and more; machinery had done it. They couldn't make as good nails by cutting machines as they could by hand, of course; but cut nails answered very well for most kinds of carpenter's work, better, perhaps, for some, because they were rough and jagged a little, and would hold faster when once driven home. The nailors had had "a many strikes"—of course he struck too—couldn't help himself if he'd been disposed, which he wasn't—thought it wrongful to grind down a hard-working man with a family. Here he pointed to a large bundle of iron rods, which he had engaged to manufacture into so many gross of large nails: we cannot venture to repeat the exact number. He assured us that he could not himself complete that job without working from seven in the morning to eight or nine at night, for six entire days; that he should receive but four shillings and eightpence from the nail-master as the payment of his wages, and that he had to find his own fuel, and replace at his own cost any iron that he might waste by accident in the pursuit of his vocation. The children, he acknowledged, were a help to him, when they had plenty of work, which wasn't always the case. He didn't like much to see the girls at the forge; 'twasn't proper work for girls; but what is a man to do? The eldest girl did household work sometimes—most weeks of a Saturday; she liked it better than nailing; she walked four miles to go to her day's work on Saturday; got a shilling and her food for it. That was a good deal more than she would make at nailing. The mother sometimes made nails; she was a very good hand, but she had enough to do in mending and making, and looking after the house and the bit of ground where they grew a few potatoes, and, mayhap, a

cabbage or two at times. She was off now with a bag of nails to the master; wouldn't be home before night. There were many nailors worse off than he; some that did the low-price work could hardly keep life in 'em, not to speak of being comfortable. They all suffered much in the late strike, a few months ago; 'twas real starvation, and nothing else; some of 'em went round the country in companies, not begging exactly, but asking for help from them who could afford to give it; he didn't go himself—thought it was no good to go. Can remember the time when there was always plenty of work, and double the price was paid for it that is paid now. Nailors were not too well off then, etc., etc.

We looked in upon other meagre and melancholy professionals of this class, a number of whom were clustered together in this district. Some were working alone, others in pairs, and others again assisted by members of their own families; but the same haggard and hopeless aspect characterized the whole community, and left us little reason to doubt that the complaints of our communicative friend, dolorous as they were, were, as respected the state of his trade, but too well founded.

By this time it was beginning to grow dusky, and certain internal suggestions admonished us that eating and drinking are indispensable ceremonies in the Iron Country as well as elsewhere. "In the worst inn's worst room," and best too, for it was the only inn, and the only room we could meet with, we found, not accommodation, but a substitute for it, which enabled us to satisfy the cravings of nature. This accomplished, we turned out in the now dark night, and from the summit of a considerable elevation obtained a view of the Iron Country under its most startling aspect. To a matter-of-fact inhabitant of the district, the view probably presents nothing more than a series of bonfires, countless in number, and varying in size according to their distance, until they dwindle away into mere specks of red and hazy light; but to a stranger who looks upon it for the first time, and whose imagination is not fettered by a knowledge of the realities of the picture, the effect is altogether different. The volumes of flame flashing and flourishing and darting snaky tongues of fire into the lurid air—the black and unfamiliar forms that on every side rise out of the earth, their dark sharp outlines relieved by the glaring back-ground—the crashing roar of ponderous hammers, whose deafening clang reverberates incessantly for miles around—the growling, rattling, and rumbling of heavy machinery—the myriad minor sounds mingled with men's voices—the impenetrable sky above, the rugged and all but invisible ground below—all together oppress the faculties of a stranger, and seem to convert the arena of man's manful mastery over the stubborn elements into a pandemonium, whose inhabitants, tortured in fire, work retributive vengeance upon each other.

We had not much time to spare, however, for indulging in such contemplations as these; we must find our way back to Birmingham; and having no confidence in our own leadership in this strange region, we have recourse to our friend the nailor, to recommend us a guide. He and his family, seated round the light of their little forge, present a far more picturesque and less wretched

appearance than they exhibited by the light of day. The flickering fire-light gives a rosy colouring to their pale, sallow, and hungry features; their ragged costume is concealed in the deep shadows cast by the flame, and the horizontal shower of sparks which fly from their busy hammers, fringe them with a border of fireworks which recalls the merry close of a gala day. The good wife, an anxious, way-worn, careful-faced matron, has come back from the town, and the sailor volunteers himself to show us to the nearest station. He has not much of a toilet to make by way of preparation—only to cast off his leatheren apron, induce some three-fifths of what was once a tolerable surtout, and bury his prematurely grizzled head in a hat much too big for him, and he is ready.

The route to the railway station does not lie through the way we came, but through a district in all respects similar, save that it seems to be, if possible, still more crowded with furnaces, workshops and factories, among which we plunge at once, so soon as we have descended the hill. Being in no immediate hurry to get home, we advise with our friend as to the practicability of inspecting the interior of some of these flaming dens of labour, with the view of verifying the little knowledge we had picked up on the subject of iron-making.

" You can see the very first part of the business here by, sir, if you like; they'll be smelting just now, over at —, if you like to step across."

" By all means," said we; and in a few minutes we were within the smelting-house, where pigs (of iron) were about to be born for our especial accommodation, as it happened. The birth of these pigs is not the most agreeable spectacle for a nervous person. First of all, the heat of the cast-house is enormously above the comfortable point. The blast furnace, where by means of currents of air forced in by a powerful steam engine, repeated charges of ore from the mine, of fuel, and of lime-stone, have in the course of the last ten or twelve hours been melted down to three or four tons of liquid iron, will not permit of the approach of any one who cannot tolerate a temperature of 120 degrees at the least. Nevertheless, an old, sapless, wiry-faced, whiskerless man of sixty, bends over an orifice in the furnace, in which he is routing with a crooked kind of poker, coaxing and humouring the vitreous slag and scum to dribble forth upon the ground beneath. He knows by the appearance of this floating refuse, the condition of the fluid metal below; and not till he is satisfied as to the quality of the liquid mass, will he suffer it to be drawn from the furnace.

The floor of the cast-room is covered with moulds of moist sand, which, in this instance, are of the very simplest kind, and such as may be constructed with the greatest readiness; they are little more than mere channels for the metal to run in, as all that is wanted to be produced is logs of iron, to be afterwards appropriated to the various uses, and subjected to the various processes, for which manufacturers may require it. All being ready for the cast, we are motioned to stand clear, which we do by mounting upon a pile of rubbish as near to the wall and as far from the furnace as possible. In a moment the dam-stone is tapped by hooking out the plug of mingled clay and sand, and forth rushes

a fountain of fire, which rapidly covers the whole floor in broad bands of white light, intersected, at regular intervals, by smaller cross bars. The sudden emission of this burning sea has increased the temperature of the place to such a pitch that we are compelled to sally out into the open air to fetch breath, leaving the pigs to the possession of their sweltering sty.

This process seems simple enough, and, to the indifferent observer, it might appear that few trades are easier to learn than the iron-smelter's, who has only to melt down the ore and cast it into these rough, homely-shaped bars, called "pigs." But the fact is, that a considerable degree of chemical knowledge, and no small experience in the practice of the art, is necessary to the successful carrying out even of this the first process in the manufacture of iron. The construction of the furnace, in the first place, is a matter of vital importance, and so is its constant preservation in an efficient state; in the next place, the proportions of the materials to be consigned to it—of the iron-stone or ore, the lime-stone, and the fuel—must be most accurately determined; then the blast of air must be steadily and regularly maintained; and even the direction of the wind and the state of the atmosphere have to be taken into account, inasmuch as the operations of the furnace are affected by them. During the whole of the smelting process, a wary and vigilant watch must be kept upon what is going on in the interior of the furnace, or the object in view may be defeated by atmospheric causes alone. It is said that, upon the average, much better iron is drawn from the furnace in winter than in summer; but it is seldom possible to predicate with accuracy the precise quality of the yield at any season of the year, seeing that so many circumstances must be favourable, and so much caution must be used in combining the proportions of ore, of flux and of fuel, in order to insure the best possible result. Perhaps the produce of the most prosperous castings are but approximations to complete success.

Pig iron may be regarded as the raw material, in the roughest form in which it comes into the manufacturing market. It is by no means pure metal, fragments of charcoal, of unmelted ore, and of earthy material being apparent, upon close inspection, by the eye alone. From causes with which we are imperfectly acquainted, pig iron is of very various quality, some being coarse-grained and of a dark colour, others silvery white and of crystalline structure, and others again of an intermediate quality. The dark cross-grained iron is sufficiently soft to yield to the action of the file, and is slightly malleable; while the white and crystalline masses are so excessively hard as to defy the teeth of the file, and so brittle as to crack like glass upon being violently struck, or on any sudden alteration of temperature. Cast iron, in order to be rendered malleable and fit for general purposes, has to undergo the process of refining, this is accomplished by melting it again in a blast furnace, by which means a great portion of its carbon is driven off, and more scoria or oxide of iron is freed. At the refinery, it is run into shallow moulds and cast into plates, which are exceedingly brittle, and ready for the puddler.

Happily, the puddling, forging, and rolling

works of Messrs. Somebody are not far off; and, leaving the pigs to cool at their leisure, while the men are busy charging the furnace for a new litter to-morrow, we follow our willing guide through a few short lanes and turnings, between mountains of dusty fuel and vitrified rubbish, and soon find ourselves in front of some half-dozen pyramidal brick towers, vomiting flames from their summits, amidst a banging, booming, rumbling, roaring, ear-splitting din which no pen can describe. The overpowering glare from such an assemblage of Titanic torches reared aloft, spreads far around a vivid light, which reveals every blade of blighted grass upon the ground, and every the minutest object nestling in the clefts of the uneven soil. Huge solid cylinders of iron, their circumferences grooved and channelled in various eccentric shapes—monster cogged wheels of the same metal—non-descript lumps and masses, fractured and rusty, mingled with beams of timber, mounds of cement, and piles of bricks and stones, are scattered liberally around the outskirts of the noisy domain. Dark forms are flitting rapidly backwards and forwards, now sharply defined before the gleaming mouth of a fiery furnace, now lost in the gloom of the murky shadows.

As we draw nearer, we are in the presence of a band of swart fellows of herculean proportions, working with bare arms, in shirt and trowsers, with an activity that knows no pause, and an earnestness not to be mistaken. One, cautiously lifting, by means of a depending lever, the portcullis which guards the mouth of his furnace, is curiously peering into the glowing dazzling disc of fire upon which we dare not rest our eyes for a moment. Another is occupied in piling up small broken fragments of iron into little heaps something less than a foot square; these are lifted gingerly, and, by means of a long iron rod, are carefully deposited in the very heart of the raging flame. A third, armed with a long hoe-shaped instrument, is furiously raking and plunging in the glowing throat of the furnace, now leaping forward to plant a thrust in the extremest depth, now retreating as rapidly from the withering heat, to catch a hasty breath. A fourth is toiling painfully, turning, twisting, and in a manner kneading the shining white metal in the furnace into a rude kind of balls, which others, as fast as they are formed, seize with their long prongs, and drag along the iron-paved floor to where the enormous steam hammer, banging away upon its broad anvil, rains down a torrent of heavy blows which never intermits for an instant. Here each separate lump, twice as big as a man's head, is subjected to the rapid concussion of the ponderous hammer, beneath which it appears almost as soft as butter, and as pliant as the white curd under the hand of the dairy-maid. Ever as the fearful blows descend with a mighty racket and roar, and with a momentum that shakes the solid earth, the workmen, with their long iron prongs fast infixed in the soft mass, twist it and turn and move it hither and thither, subjecting now this side and now that to the fast falling blows, until each has moulded his mass, by dint of the most enormous expenditure of rapid labour, into the required form. These forms are various: some are long parallelograms, others are shorter and nearly solid squares, others again are

considerably flattened and shaped something like a lady's fan; these last are for rolling into boiler plates.

Watching an opportunity to pass unsinged through this very fiery fraternity, we leave the neighbourhood of the formidable forge, beyond which, at the distance of a few paces, a long row of rollers are in full activity, and supplying no small quota to the general uproar. At first view, this startling spectacle looks like a scene of magic and enchantment, where figures are brandishing fiery serpents, which are seen writhing as if in torment. The business is, however, managed in a manner orderly enough. The white-hot masses, or "blooms," being hammered into a convenient shape at the heavy forge, have now to be rolled into bars or sheets. The hard iron rollers, through which they have to be drawn, and which appear to average about fourteen inches in circumference, and to vary in length from about three to five feet, are revolving with great velocity, but each alternate pair in different directions. The rollers which are for the production of sheet metal have plain polished surfaces, while those applied to the production of bars or rods are grooved to the required pattern. The mass of iron to be rolled is seized by a long pair of grips or pincers, in the hands of the workman, and pushed forward up an inclined plane, till one end of it is applied to the groove in the rollers through which it has to be drawn. It frequently happens that this end is too large for the orifice presented to it; but a boy stands by with an apronful of sand; if the red-hot metal grates upon the cylinder without being drawn in, he dashes a few grains upon it, and in a moment it bites and is drawn through. It is instantly seized by a workman on the other side, and returned through a smaller orifice in the next pair of rollers. It is now four times the length it was originally, and bent in the form of a serpent; with singular rapidity and dexterity, it is immediately despatched again through the third pair of rollers, returns as quickly through the fourth, and is finally disposed of by a passage through the fifth, after which it is allowed to cool, during which operation it is flattened into the form of a bar of iron some twenty feet in length, perhaps three inches in width, and not one inch in thickness. But, of course, it may happen to be of a very different shape and length, as both are dependent upon the form and capacity of the grooves in the cylinders between which it is drawn. The apparent ease with which the workmen toss about these unwieldy lumps and lengths of red-hot metal is not the least remarkable feature of this, to a stranger, astonishing process. The rolling of iron into sheets or boiler-plates is managed in a manner very similar, the thickness of the plates being regulated by the distance between the surfaces of the revolving cylinders.

The above brief sketch of the three ceremonies of smelting, puddling, and rolling, may serve to give the inexperienced reader some idea of the manufacture of what is widely known in the commercial world as British bar iron. He is not however to suppose that an article thus produced would be any great credit to the manufacturer. Bars but once rolled as above described, though they are exported to some extent, are considered in the

light of most cheap articles, and would require to undergo at least a repetition of the process before they are fit for the home market. For this purpose the No. 1, or puddled bars, as they are called, are cut up into lengths, and exposed in the furnace to a welding heat; they there lose a portion of the impurities yet remaining in the iron, and which runs from them in a fluid state. When heated to the welding temperature, they are taken to the rollers, passed through as before, with perhaps an additional pressure from a finishing roller, which gives them their most perfect form and dimensions. For the manufacture of best iron, however, the bars are again cut into lengths, again welded in the furnace, and again rolled—after which it is supposed to be susceptible of no further improvement by these processes—supposing always that it has been made from the best materials and without any mixture of cinder in the smelting or puddling furnaces; which is perhaps a rare occurrence, seeing how easy it is for the puddler to augment the yield by the introduction of cinder from the forge into the furnace.

It may be readily conceived, that by means of the steam forge and the rolling-mills, workers in iron are enabled to accomplish many things which were impracticable before the introduction of these modern inventions. Sixty years ago it was never attempted to forge anything exceeding one hundred weight under the hammer; at the present time anchor shanks and steam-engine shafts weighing from two or three to six or seven tons are fashioned at the forge. It is by means of the rolling mills that iron and all other metals are prepared at a comparatively small expense, in forms the most convenient for the manufacturers of different articles. Bars, flat, curved, or angular, cylindrical rods, railway bars, plates, and sheets of any width or thickness—all are readily producible by rolling—the pattern depending upon the grooves cut in the rollers. The rollers themselves are of various sizes, from five or six feet in length, and eighteen inches in diameter, to a length of little more than a foot and a diameter of less than four inches. They require to be cast of the best materials, and carefully finished off in the lathe; the smaller and finishing rollers especially have to be fitted up with the greatest accuracy; and a steam-engine of from 80 to 100 horse-power is necessary to drive them in a factory where the average production of finished iron is about 200 tons a week.

On leaving the dazzling glare and roasting atmosphere that surround the mills and furnaces for the cold and gloomy aspect of a November night, it is some time before we recover our powers of vision. Our way leads again over narrow muddy pathways and tramways, bounded on all sides by mountainous masses of slag and refuse from the smelting houses. We cannot help speculating as we wander after our guide upon the possibility that the ingenuity of man may one day discover the means of turning these tremendous accumulations of rubbish to some profitable purpose. We may be laughed at for the notion, but that does not render it really absurd; many an idea, which served as a laughing-stock at first, has proved a general benefaction in the end.

Many centuries ago the Romans, and after them

the Danes, made iron in this country; they left behind them immense accumulations of scoria, which, owing to the insufficiency of their means of manufacture, yet contained from 30 to 40 per cent. of iron. In after years, when the modes of manufacture had improved, and more powerful furnaces were constructed, it was found profitable to resmelt this rubbish of a former age, and a new species of property was thus created. A mine of Danish and Roman cinders was as good or better than one of unworked ore; companies were formed, and vast deposits of scoria, which had lain concealed for ages beneath decayed forests were dug out and thrown again into the fire. It has been calculated that in the Dean Forest alone twenty furnaces were in operation for a period of more than three hundred years, making iron from the cinders left by the Romans and the Danes, instead of from iron ore. We are far from supposing that the mountains of slag which cover the surface of the Iron Country in every direction could be profitably made to produce more iron; but it appears not altogether impossible that, in combination with some other substance, it may at some future day be found applicable to useful purposes.

While we were pondering such probabilities, or improbabilities, as the reader may choose to consider them, the old nailor suddenly stopped, and pointing in the direction of a small heap of broken bricks and mingled lath and plaster, demanded in a rather significant tone of voice, if we knew what that was. Not being able to answer his question, save by a negative, he proceeded to explain that that little heap of rubbish was all that remained of a handsome house, surrounded by a neat garden, which had been the pride of the owner, who built the one and laid out the other but a few years ago. By way of distinction he had called his mansion "The Villa," by which title for three or four short years it was known in the neighbourhood. One sunny afternoon, however, while the proprietor was quietly and comfortably seated in his arbour, with his eyes complacently fixed on his *dulce domum*, the walls of the edifice suddenly dissolved partnership; the drawing-room floor made a descent into the parlour, while the chimneys came toppling over upon the grass-plot. The worthy owner had hardly time to protest against these proceedings, when he found his pipe extinguished and himself sitting up to his neck in water, and it was with no small difficulty that he scrambled into the road which bordered his domain. The house was a complete ruin before night; the garden sunk six feet beneath the surface of a stagnant pool, and the family, happily uninjured, was driven to seek another shelter. The best part of the building materials had been carted off to erect a new residence, but enough yet remained to serve as a memorial of the place, and a warning to future speculators. The nailor's explanation of the disastrous phenomenon was simple enough: "the land had crowned in," he said; "it warn't wise to put up a great house like that over an old mine." He gave us further to understand that "land for building may be had here very cheap; you may buy the surface, if you only want that, or you may buy the old mine too; but it don't do to put much load upon the land without shoring up below."

But we are at the railway station—the bell is

ringing—farewell, old sailor. Seven short runs and as many stoppages—the blazing pinnacles of the Iron Country rushing away in our rear, as we rattle on. At length we are crashing through the tunnel that runs beneath the town, and now, stopping at the central station in the heart of Birmingham, are once more in our temporary home.

THE TWO GRAVES.

HERE is an open grave waiting for its tenant. A grave in sunny France; but there is no sunshine around it—no words of hope graven upon its granite—no comfort in the mocking wreath of yellow amaranth. It is the grave of a woman. See how the senseless dust is hurried from yonder regal pile,—amidst storm and rain. Hark to a jesting voice: “Madame la Marquise has rainy weather for this her last journey.”^{*} Alas the change! But a few years since, that voice was the voice of a lover; but a little while since, that clay was a living, breathing, sparkling beauty; but a day since, and her word was still law: she commanded and was obeyed. That stately pile is Versailles,—so joyless now in its grandeur, so artificial in its nature, that one almost marvels how the little birds can sing, how the flowers can give out fragrance, how the waters can reflect the sun-light. Once, however, it was thronged with gay crowds and beautiful pageants; once the shrouded corpse of that narrow home was foremost amidst them all, with her rare and varied beauty,—her graceful step in the dance—her jest in the merry laughter—her voice in the sweet song. Once, too, she had been a wife, the beloved wife of her husband, but she wrenches the tie asunder, and became the guilty favourite of a king. Then, though her diadem was of gold, it had not even the dim jewel Shame in it: she knew no shame, for she lacked no reverence;—the “chère amie” of an Empress,[†] the idol of a Monarch—the arbitress of destinies, and dynasties—all around bowed to her will, and lauded her words, as if she had been a crowned wife.

Not one of the listless butterflies of fashion, this woman was diligent. In what? “From the time she became the king’s mistress, to the epoch of her death, to please and amuse her royal lover was the sole study of her life.”[‡] To consolidate her power, and render her talents, as well as her charms necessary to Louis ^{xv}, she kindled the sparks of the Seven Years’ War, which scathed and shamed the land, and she linked the houses of France and Austria in the union afterwards so fatal.[§]

Soon, however, there came a change over the dream, and it turned to dread reality. The loveliness faded, and the monarch’s so-called love faded with it. In her despondency she said, that “for a beautiful woman to lose her beauty was worse than death.” Then, too, the strength failed.—No longer able to contend with the cares and disappointments, and toilsome pleasures of her almost regal life, it is little wonder that she named it “a continual death.” Then also might be heard the precursors of the storm, the mutterings of the distant thunder; for the miseries of France had already found a voice, not loud, but deep,^{||} and Louis, once fondly named by his people, “le bien-aimé,” and she, his guilty counsellor, were hated and abjured; but no matter,—“after us the deluge.”^{|||} Alas! she forgot the more immediate deluge which awaits the impenitent soul, even the hail and the overflowing waters, which sweep away every refuge of lies. (Isa. xxviii. 17.) Bereavement was not wanting in the cup of retribution—and “soul devouring ennui,” perhaps a worse affliction to a Frenchwoman than all else beside.—At last Death came, from the name and thought of which she had ever shrunk with horror and disgust. He came, and would not depart, and so she died; and none wept over the grave of

MADAME DE POMPADOUR.

Here is another grave—not in France, but in England—

* Miss Kavanagh’s “Women of France,” vol. 1, p. 289.
 † Ibid., p. 277. ‡ Ibid., p. 275. § Ibid., p. 278.
 || “Women of France,” p. 286, Louis ^{xvi} and Marie Antoinette.

near the sea. In the day when the graves shall be opened, and the dead shall arise, how joyfully the sleeper will spring to greet her Lord! Many a tear fell, and many a heart was sore, when she died; but soon she shall live again. She too was diligent: it was the sole study of her life to serve and to please her heavenly King. And first she was diligent in her calling. She was a dress-maker at Yarmouth: not one praised by the titled and the beautiful; nor one whose work enfolded graceful forms; nor one of the interesting and oppressed dress-makers commemorated in songs and novels. No; she was only an industrious well-doing seamstress in a provincial town. But she had a higher calling, in which she diligently laboured; she ministered unto the hungry and the thirsty, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner. She did more than feed the body, and visit fettered limbs. She led many hungry, destitute, captive souls to the cross of Christ, and God gave her saved sinners, both young and old, as her hope and crown of rejoicing. It was a life of self-crucifixion:—taking up the cross daily, and following Jesus—pleasing him, and not pleasing men; for she had no renown, and little praise, yet she could say, “My own path was bright from first to last, in the knowledge of God, and the smile of His favour.” Every Sabbath-day she went to the prison, and four or five days in the week beside—reading, and praying, and exhorting, and teaching. For three and twenty years she endured an amount of fatigue, which her delicate frame was little fitted to bear: keeping accounts, cutting out clothes for the unclothed, writing, preparing the prisoners’ copy books, keeping a watchful eye upon the liberated as well as those still in prison, and labouring with her needle in the materials for her own support, and the means of administering to others. At last the frail tabernacle began to dissolve, and pain came in violent agonies; in a few moments of ease she thus writes: “I am so slow a scholar in the school of love and mercy, that my dear Redeemer cannot allow me to go home yet, but He will soon ‘perfect that which concerneth me.’”

“In pain to-day, these words came from heaven to my soul: ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.’ ‘Yes, my Father,’ I replied, ‘I do behold the Lamb.’”

“Oh the beauty of His spotless righteousness! A spotless robe, and the blood, the precious blood, the peacemaking blood!”

The beautiful description of the Christian—“not one who looks up from earth to heaven, but one who looks down from heaven on earth”—became increasingly descriptive of her state. She shrank more and more from the society of those who did not love Jesus; and wherever she went her proposal was,—“Let us read God’s word together.” The furnace of bodily pain was heated seven-fold, yet was she calm and joyful; and when told that death was just approaching she said, “Thank God! Thank God!” The prayer contained in her own touching verses was tenderly fulfilled—

“I am a stranger in this world;
 When shall I rise to dwell with thee?
 When shall the friendly hand of death
 Set my imprison’d spirit free?”

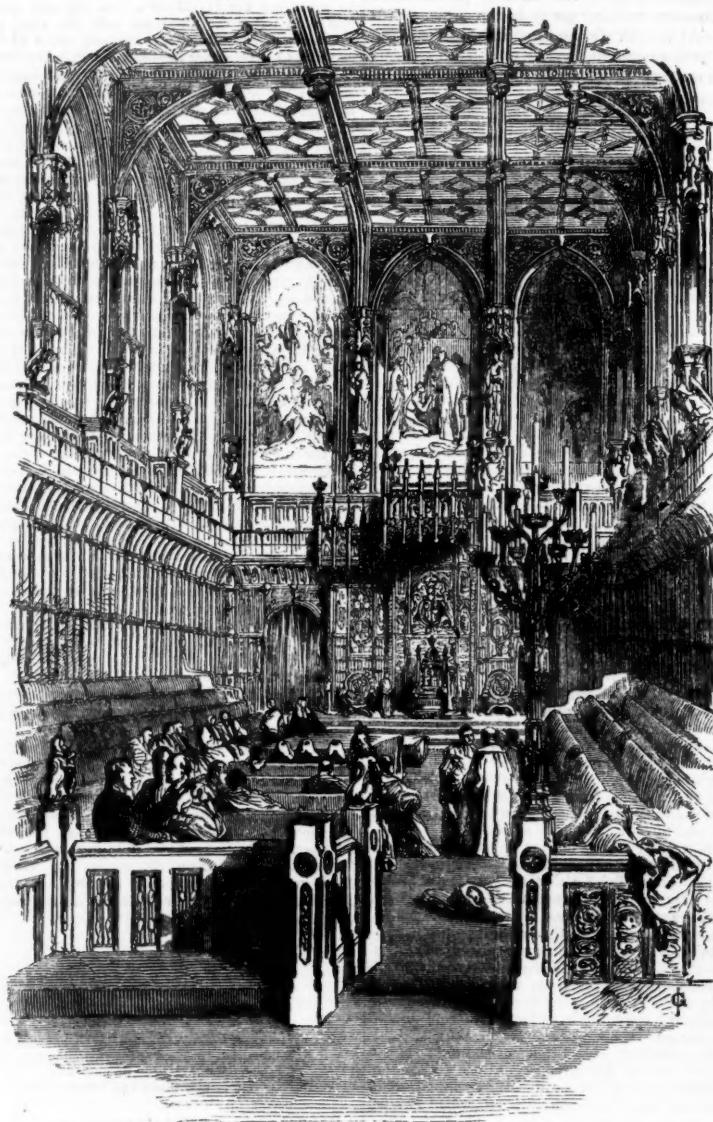
“The threatening skies are dark; the storm
 Seems gathering o’er my drooping head;
 Let hope divine, let joy be pour’d
 On one to this world’s pleasures dead.”

“Show me at once, by that pure light
 Which meets the soul from heav’n to earth,
 That by thy word these lowering clouds
 Shall to a brighter scene give birth.”

“Now worn with conflict in the war,
 Though victory still shall crown my days,
 More of thy presence give, and fill
 My heart with love, my lips with praise.”

How sweet and tender will be the voice which she is yet to hear, “Come, thou blessed of my Father!” and how blissful, doubtless, has already been the meeting between the kindred spirits of John Howard, Elizabeth Fry, and SARAH MARTIN!

INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS.



THE House of Lords is constituted on the great principle of the perpetuation of hereditary distinction and power. "It forms," said Charles I., "an excellent screen between the prince and the people, to protect each against the encroachments of the other." The crown, being the source of honour, can alone confer rank, or precedence. It has unlimited authority in the creation of peers, and, indeed, of creating temporal peers for life; but it has only been exercised so far as by calling up the eldest sons of peers, an operation which merely adds to the numbers of the upper house during the lives of the individuals. The only restriction upon the power of creation refers to the Irish peerage—of which there are twenty-eight members

who sit by election for life—who cannot be made in a greater proportion than that of one to every three peerages that become extinct. The hereditary nature of the peerage is a great check to the power of creating new peers.

The authority on which peers hold their seats is different. Some gain them by descent or inheritance, some by creation, as do all newly-made peers, and some by election. The list includes sixteen Scotch peers, who are elected at the beginning of every parliament by the Scotch nobility; and the twenty-eight Irish peers, who, in like manner represent the Irish peerage, but are elected for life. They are called representative peers.